

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O P 181100Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0760

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 4520

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CY UK

SUBJECT: MAKARIOS ATTEMPTS TO VISIT TURKISH SBA REFUGEES

1. SUMMARY. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER IS INCREASINGLY AND DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT PLIGHT OF 8,500 TURKISH CYPRIOT REFUGEES IN EPISKOPI SBA (PARAMALI SECTOR) AND LIKELIHOOD OF TURKISH RETALIATION AGAINST UK CITIZENS IF EARLY AGREEMENT ON RELEASE OF REFUGEES CANNOT BE OBTAINED. END SUMMARY.

2. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER OLVER HAS BRIEFED ME ON VISIT WHICH MAKARIOS ATTEMPTED TO MAKE TO TURKISH REFUGEES ON SBA DECEMBER 17.

3. MAKARIOS GAVE UK HIGH COMMISSION ONLY A FEW HOURS' NOTICE OF HIS INTENTION. WITH CONSIDERABLE TREPIDATION, BOTH HERE AND IN LONDON, BRITISH AGREED BUT WITH CAVEAT THAT THEY COULD NOT ENSURE ARCHBISHOP'S SAFETY.

4. ON ARRIVAL AT PARAMALI WITH EXCORTING SECURITY CARS, MAKARIOS WAS GREETED BY AN ANGRY CROWD OF THIRTY TURKISH REFUGEES WHICH QUICKLY SWELLED TO 100. MAKARIOS' SECURITY PEOPLE LEFT THEIR CARS AND POINTED GUNS AT CROWD WHICH BEGAN THROWING STONES AT ESCORT CARS. BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENED AND URGED MAKARIOS WITHDRAW, AWARE THAT A MUCH
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LARGER CROWD, PERHAPS ARMED, WAS WAITING FURTHER DOWN THE

ROAD.

5. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION WITH SBA OFFICIALS, MAKARIOS SAID HIS INTENTION HAD BEEN TO TAKE A POLL OF REFUGEE SENTIMENT ON EVACUATION AS OPPOSED TO RETURN TO HOMES, WHICH HE HAD BEEN ABOUT TO OFFER TO REHABILITATE AT GOC EXPENSE.

6. UK HIGH COMMISSION THINKS THAT ON BALANCE MAKARIOS' VISIT WAS A SLIGHT PLUS IN THAT HE HAD AT LEAST BRIEF OPPORTUNITY SEE FOR HIMSELF HOW DIFFICULT IS THE SITUATION OF TENTED REFUGEES NOW THAT HEAVY RAINS HAVE BEGUN. HE GAINED CLEARER SENSE OF REFUGEE ANGER.

7. UK HIGH COMMISSION HOPES THAT DISPOSITION OF SBA REFUGEES CAN BE MATTER OF FIRST PRIORITY ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS IF CLERIDES-DENKTASH TALKS RESUME. HAVING RECEIVED A LONG HARANGUE FROM DENKTASH DEC 17 ON REASONS WHY HE MOST RELUCTANT NEGOTIATE WITH MAKARIOS IN THE PICTURE, OLVER WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC.

8. I TOLD OLVER THAT AT DECEMBER 16 MEETING TO INTRODUCE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EUR/SE LEDSKY WE HAD GOTTEN IMPRESSION FROM MAKARIOS THAT HE PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE ON NORTHWARD MOVEMENT OF TURKS REMAINING IN SOUTH.

9. OLVER FEARS THAT IF PROBLEM OF SBA TURKS IS NOT RESOLVED QUICKLY, TURKS WILL INITIATE AN ESCALATING RETALIATION AGAINST BRITISH. OLVER THINKS THIS WILL START WITH PROHIBITION OF ENTRY BY UK CITIZENS INTO TURKISH ZONE AND MIGHT AT A LATER STAGE BE CARRIED AS FAR AS EXPULSION OF THE APPROXIMATELY 150 BRITISH RESIDENTS THERE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, SECURITY, PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NICOSI04520
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740367-1197
From: NICOSIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741226/aaaaavqt.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAKARIOS ATTEMPTS TO VISIT TURKISH SBA REFUGEES
TAGS: PFOR, CY, UK, (MAKARIOS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005